



Commissioner Brad Avakian  
Bureau of Labor and Industries

## COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE – December 23, 2009

Dear Friends:

The holidays are fully upon us and I hope that you are enjoying them as much as I am. In some ways it is hard to believe that we're less than 10 days from ringing in the year 2010. 2009 has been a busy and productive year for BOLI. We have worked hard and will continue to do so, looking forward to making more progress for Oregonians' civil rights and employment rights in the new year.

This edition of the Commissioner's Message features a festive news briefing on the (highly successful) Employment Law Conference, last week's State Apprenticeship Council meeting and exciting happenings on the horizon at BOLI. But first I have to say a few words about a special drive by BOLI employees to support the Raphael House.

Many of you are probably familiar with the Raphael House, a multi-faceted domestic violence agency dedicated to fighting the causes and effects of intimate partner violence since 1977. A secure shelter for families escaping domestic violence is just one of the services that they offer. (If you're interested in learning more about this great organization, [click here](#).) In addition to strongly supporting Raphael House's mission, BOLI employees also serve some of the same Oregonians through enforcement of the domestic violence leave act and, beginning on January 1, enforcement of the new [employment protections for survivors of domestic violence](#).

BOLI also stepped up last week to collect donations from our staff to help supply Raphael House with items to use in their shelter and in move-out kits. BOLI staff filled three giant barrels with donations and piled more items up around them in just a few days. While there is no official count on number of items or dollar value, I think that this effort was a huge success.

This example highlights the dedication that BOLI employees have to serving our fellow Oregonians. We participate in the Charitable Fund Drive and the Governor's Food Drive along with all state employees, but I want to say a special thank you to the people at BOLI who stepped up, yet again, to do even more work without any extra time to do it. I'm proud of this and all of the contributions that Team BOLI makes to Oregon. I think an even bigger thank you goes to the Raphael House, though, for being out there every day in support of a particularly vulnerable group of Oregonians.

Next issue I'll share BOLI's New Year's Resolution, but until then, Safe and Happy Holidays to all of you.

Sincerely,

Brad Avakian  
State Labor Commissioner

If you want to help spread the word about our work on all these important issues, encourage your friends and colleagues to [sign up for the Commissioner's Message](#).

*The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.*

## **Slow Economy No Match for BOLI Employment Conference**

*Record number of attendees show value of 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Employment Law Conference*

BOLI is claiming a victory over the slow economy by virtue of record-breaking attendance at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Employment Law Conference. More than 350 conference attendees crowded seminars at the Oregon Convention Center December 9-10, exceeding last year's (then record) attendance and proving how much Oregon employers value the annual conference, even in a tough economy.

“The turnout in this room tells me that Oregon employers recognize the value of BOLI's Technical Assistance Program,” said Commissioner Brad Avakian, chief of BOLI. “A slow economy does not reduce the need for employers to comply with civil rights and employment laws; in fact, it highlights the need for cost-effective seminars and other services like those provided by our Technical Assistance staff.”

BOLI's conference, a function of the Technical Assistance for Employers Program (TA), offers sessions on diverse employment law topics, from ongoing issues like I-9's and worker classification to emerging issues like employment protection for armed service members and protected leave for domestic violence survivors.

“I come every year,” said Raelynn Leavitt, a conference regular. “The presenters keep it short and to the point, with nice presentations and great reference materials.” Speaking of a session on “Working with BOLI and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,” conference attendee Leeann Lewis said: “I loved the presentation. There was good interaction, it was engaging and provided real world knowledge; it was easy to understand and practical.”

Employers can contact TA at 971-673-0824 or online at [www.oregon.gov/boli/ta](http://www.oregon.gov/boli/ta) anytime for answers to questions about civil rights or employment law, state or federal. The program is funded almost entirely by revenue from seminar registrations and sales of informational handbooks and posters, making it vulnerable to understaffing when the economy forces employers to scale back spending on training.

---

### **State Apprenticeship Council: Forging Oregon's Workforce for the New Economy**

The Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council (OSATC) held its quarterly meeting on Thursday, December 17, at Northwest College of Construction in Portland. Working through five pages of agenda items, the Council approved and welcomed some 30 appointees to various Apprenticeship and Training Committees from around Oregon. Also on the agenda were new and revised training standards for seven apprenticeship programs in Portland, Lane County and Ontario, as well as compliance reviews for nine programs and affirmative action goals and timetables for inside electrical apprentices in Roseburg and plumbers in Central Oregon.

OSATC is chaired by the State Labor Commissioner, but Council members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The eight members spend four-year terms overseeing 167 local committees who run 326 programs to train Oregon's next generation workforce. Oregon currently has 6,300 apprentices learning 114 trades in programs registered by OSATC and BOLI's Apprenticeship and Training Division.

*The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.*

## Technical Assistance Seminars Scheduled, PWR Seminars Announced Soon

While dedicated readers of the Commissioner’s Message know that upcoming events of interest are listed at the end of each newsletter, the latest scheduling information for BOLI’s educational seminars is also available on our website, specifically:

The [January – June 2010 schedule is here](#) for Technical Assistance Seminars

The Winter and Spring 2010 schedules for Prevailing Wage Seminars will be announced after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year

-----

*Mark your calendars –*  
***The Oregon Council on Civil Rights (OCCR)***  
*holds its next public meeting on*  
***January 28, 2010.***

*OCCR will once again meet at the Portland State Office Building*  
***800 NE Oregon St. Portland, OR 97232***  
***Conference Room 1-A***

-----

### **Upcoming BOLI Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Jan. 14	TA Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	<a href="#">Effective Supervisory Practices</a>	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Jan. 26 & 27	TA Seminar	Salem	<a href="#">Leave Laws in OR: a 2-Day Training</a>	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Jan. 28	OCCR Meeting	Portland State Office Bldg.	The Co-Chairs are developing the agenda	Kate Newhall @ 971-673-0786
Feb. 3 & 4	TA Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	<a href="#">Leave Laws in OR: a 2-Day Training</a>	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Feb. 17	TA Seminar	Eugene	<a href="#">Wage and Hour Laws</a>	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Feb. 23	TA Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	<a href="#">Wage and Hour Laws</a>	TA Program @ 971-673-0825

*The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.*